

# Does Self-Enhancement Affect Spending Behavior: An Experimental Analysis

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## Background

**Spending Behavior:** Willingness to *spend* money has been shown to be associated with positive affect and self-esteem.

- **Positive Affect** – Experiencing more positive feelings is associated with more spending (Arnolds & Reynolds, 2009).
- **Self-Esteem** – Higher self-esteem is associated with less spending (Yurchisin et al., 2008).

**Self-Enhancement** is the motivation to maintain or bolster one's self-esteem (Brown, Collins, & Schmidt, 1988).

- **Well-Being** – Self-enhancing may lead to potential benefits for well-being, one's general psychological health and happiness (O'Mara et al., 2012).

## The Present Study

To examine the effects of self-enhancement on spending behavior and subsequent well-being.

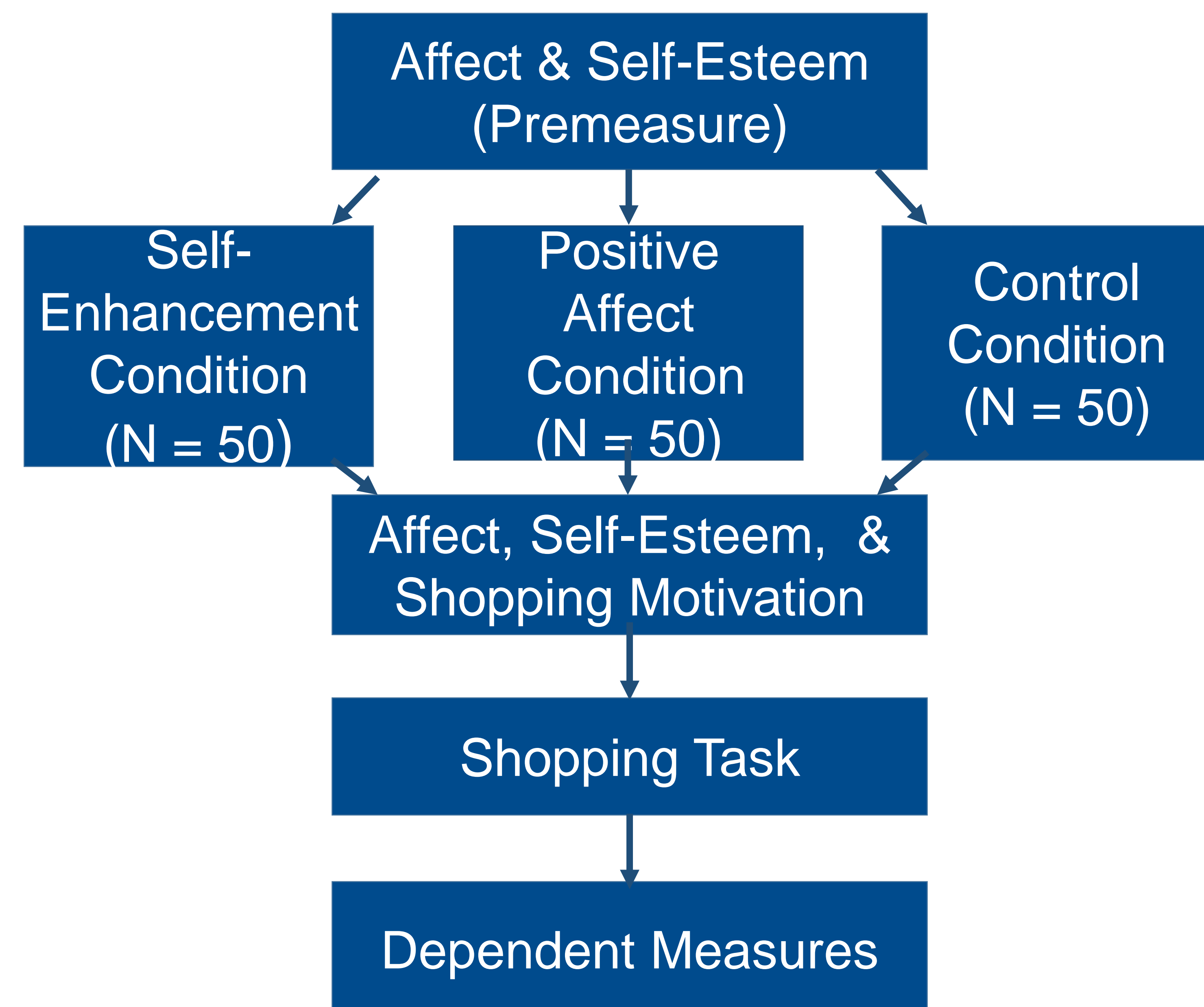
### Hypotheses:

- Self-enhancing will be associated with spending less money compared to inducing positive affect and a control condition.
- Both self-enhancing and the positive affect condition will be associated with higher well-being compared to the control condition.

### Participants

One-hundred and fifty undergraduate students will complete this study in exchange for course credit. The study will be administered online through SurveyMonkey.

## Design



## Measures

**Positive and Negative Affective Schedule** (Watson et al., 1988): ½ pre and ½ post

**Rosenberg Self-esteem** (Rosenberg, 1965) ½ pre and ½ post

**Amount Spent in shopping task**

**Shopping Motivation Questionnaire** (Kim, 2006)

**Well-Being Composite**

- *Subjective Well-Being Scale* (Sevastost et al., 1992)
- *Perceived Stress Scale* (Cohen et al., 1983)
- *Satisfaction With Life Scale* (Pavot & Diener, 1993)
- *Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale* (Radloff, 1977)

**Demographics:** Gender, Age, and Race

## Experimental Conditions

**Self-Enhancement:** Participants will be asked to think about their most valued character trait and to write about how they exhibit this trait more than others (O'Mara et al., 2012).

**Positive Affect:** Participants will be asked to think about a positive life event and to reconstruct how that event came to be (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003).

**Control:** Participants will directly move on to the other dependent variables.

## Shopping Task

The shopping task asks participants to pretend that they have \$25 to shop for a gift for a family member from the UD Bookstore. Participants will be asked to pretend that they are truly shopping for a gift and that they can choose to purchase items for themselves as well (example items below).



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